

him as one of their own. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to wish Richard Paul Ellis a happy 100th birthday, and I wish him many more years of health and happiness.

RECOGNIZING EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, DISASTER RECOVERY AND RELIEF EFFORTS IN SHELBY COUNTY

**HON. MIKE PENCE**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Mr. PENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and recognize the extraordinary contributions of emergency management, disaster response, and recovery personnel as well as elected officials and community leaders in my district which was devastated by the recent severe weather in Indiana.

I wish particularly to honor the Board of Commissioners and County Council, as well as these outstanding individuals in Shelby County:

Mike Schantz, Director, Emergency Management Agency

Michael Bowlby, Sheriff

Scott Furgeson, Mayor, City of Shelbyville

Bill Elliott, Chief of Police, City of Shelbyville

These areas suffered greatly from severe storms and weather, creating a catastrophe of nature that inflicted injuries, destroyed property, and displaced many of our citizens. In response, these officials went above and beyond the call of duty, showing great poise while saving many lives and serving the people of their communities.

Madam Speaker, I commend these fine men and women for their tremendous dedication to the Hoosier families, businesses, farmers and communities that they serve. As Hoosiers continue to recover from Mother Nature's fury, I feel confident that the people of Shelby County will be well served by these officials.

INTRODUCTION OF CRUISE VESSEL SECURITY AND SAFETY ACT

**HON. DORIS O. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, June 26, 2008*

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Cruise Vessel Security and Safety Act. This bicameral, comprehensive cruise safety reform legislation has been informed by 2 years of research and numerous Congressional hearings.

Madam Speaker, over 12 million Americans will travel on cruise lines in 2008. Within 5 years, that number is expected to reach 20 million. Unfortunately, few of these passengers fully appreciate how vulnerable they are to crime while at sea. Cruise ships, which operate under foreign flags of convenience, are not required under U.S. law to report crimes that occur outside of U.S. territorial waters. Citizens who are victimized often do not know their legal rights or who to contact for help in the immediate aftermath of the crime.

In recent years, the media has reported on a number of high profile cases of passengers

falling overboard, passengers gone missing and passengers being raped and sexually assaulted. Sadly, many of these cases remain unresolved.

My involvement in this issue began after a young woman from my district, Laurie Dishman, came to me for assistance after she had been a victim of a violent crime on a cruise ship. Laurie shared her shocking story with me in a letter 2 years ago. At its heart, this bill addresses the concerns brought to my office 2 years ago by my constituent, Laurie Dishman.

As a passenger on board a Royal Caribbean cruise ship, Laurie was raped by a crew member. One of the most disturbing aspects of Laurie's case is that the cruise ship on which she was raped had inadequate security staff. As a result, the cruise line promoted someone with no training to perform security personnel duties. If a real security guard had been on duty that evening, Laurie may have been spared her awful ordeal. The tragedy that ensued is something that Laurie will never forget.

Laurie was brave enough to report the incident to the crew authorities, even though they treated her poorly and with little sensitivity. She also reported the crime to the FBI. Unfortunately, the U.S. Attorney's office declined the case for prosecution just 4 days later.

I have since learned that there have been no convictions for rape cases on cruise lines in four decades. This statistic takes on a new meaning through the lens of Laurie's experience.

Laurie told her story at a Transportation and Infrastructure, Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee hearing on crimes on cruise ships. At the hearing she spoke of her experience and also ways to improve prevention methods, including: peep holes and security latches on stateroom doors; instituting sensitivity training for crew members; and ensuring more CCTV cameras in hallways.

After the hearing, I introduced the Protect Americans from Crimes on Cruise Ships Resolution on September 17, 2007, with Representatives CHRISTOPHER SHAYS and CAROLYN MALONEY. The resolution has over 30 cosponsors.

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee held a follow-up hearing on September 19, 2007. We heard from other victims, some who were raped or assaulted while on a cruise; others who lost family members at sea. Unfortunately, we did not hear that the cruise lines had changed many of their standard operating procedures to reflect the previous hearing. In fact, just a few weeks before the hearing, a young woman had been raped on a cruise ship and was not given access to proper care.

These incidents beg the question: what is the process when a crime is committed on a cruise line and what recourse do victims have? The more Members of Congress have inquired, the more we have learned that there is no shortage of cases of rape, sexual assaults of minors, alcohol-related fighting and abuse, and persons overboard.

Most recently, Senator KERRY and Senator LAUTENBERG held a hearing on cruise safety. Less than a month before the hearing, a constituent of Senator LAUTENBERG's went missing while on a cruise, and was believed to have gone overboard. The family was not immediately

notified of the incident. This incident occurred 4 years after Ken Carver's daughter, Merrian, went missing on a Royal Caribbean cruise to Alaska. Since then, Ken has been instrumental in organizing victims to promote safety on cruise ships, including starting the International Cruise Victims organization and developing a 10-point program to improve safety on cruise ships.

Today, as a result of Mr. Carver, Ms. Dishman, and all of the many families of victims who have suffered so greatly, I am introducing a comprehensive reform bill with my esteemed colleagues CHRIS SHAYS, CAROLYN MALONEY, LLOYD DOGETT and JOHN LEWIS to address the public safety concerns on cruise ships.

Our legislation seeks to improve ship safety, provide transparency in reporting, improve crime scene response, improve training procedures and enforce safety and environmental standards.

**Improve Ship Safety.** Our legislation would improve ship safety by mandating guard rails to reach 54 inches in height and entry doors of each passenger stateroom and crew cabin to have peep holes, security latches, and time sensitive key technology. Ship owners would be required to implement fire safety codes as well as technology to detect when a passenger falls overboard. Procedures would also be established to determine which crew members have access to staterooms and when.

**Provide Transparency in Reporting.** The legislation would establish a reporting structure based on the current voluntary agreement in place between the cruise industry, the FBI, and the Coast Guard. Additionally, each ship would be required to maintain a log book, which would record all deaths, missing individuals, alleged crimes, and passenger/crew-member complaints regarding theft, sexual harassment, and assault. The log books would be available to FBI and Coast Guard electronically, as well as to any law enforcement officer upon request. Statistical information would be posted on a public Web site maintained by the Coast Guard.

**Improve Crime Scene Response.** Each ship would be required to maintain antiretroviral medications and medications used to prevent sexually transmitted diseases after assault, as well as equipment and materials for performing a medical examination to determine if a victim has been raped. A United States licensed medical practitioner would be on every ship to perform the necessary examinations and to administer treatment. Private medical information would be protected, and would require written authorization for release. Additionally, all passengers would be given free, immediate, and confidential access to a National Sexual Assault Hotline and the FBI.

**Improve Training Procedures.** The legislation would establish a program designed by the Coast Guard and the FBI, and certified by the Administrator of the Maritime Administration, to train appropriate crewmembers in crime scene investigation. Each ship would be required to maintain one crewmember trained and certified under such a program.

**Enforce Safety and Environmental Standards.** The Coast Guard is authorized to dispatch personnel to monitor discharge of waste, to verify logbook entries related to waste treatment and disposal, and to act as public safety officers by securing and collecting evidence of alleged crimes. Additionally, the Secretary of the Coast Guard shall